

Joseph H. Warner Home
800 Vine Street, at SE corner Vine and
Palmetto Streets
Chattanooga
Hamilton County
Tennessee

HABS No. TN-208

HABS
-TENN,
33-CHAT,
11-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

JOSEPH H. WARNER HOME

HABS No. TN-208

HABS
TENN
23-CHAT
11-

Location: 800 Vine Street, at the southeast corner of Vine and Palmetto Streets, Chattanooga, Hamilton County, Tennessee.

Present Owner: Metropolitan Investment Corporation, 5924 Shallowford Road, Chattanooga, Tennessee, 37421.

Present Use: Vacant.

Significance: The Joseph H. Warner Home, built 1890-91 and designed by Townsend and Stone, Chattanooga architects, is among the grandest of the high Queen Anne structures in Chattanooga. Its pressed red brick with stone trim is indicative of the Romanesque architecture that dominated the finer residences of the commercial and industrial aristocracy of the post-reconstruction South. The residence's solid oak panelling and woodwork, its large hallways, its mantelpieces and tile work, its elegant terra cotta and rusticated stone trim, its turret and steep pitch roof covered with slate, and its asymmetrical plan characterize a house that was expressly designed with a desire for luxury and opulence, but also for efficiency, comfort, and naturalness.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The residence was begun in the Fall of 1890 and was completed the following year. The family had moved in by the Fall of 1891.
2. Architects: Fred E. Townsend and Guy Stone operating under the name of Townsend and Stone, architects, Chattanooga. F. Herb Townsend served as the draftsman.

Townsend and Stone maintained an active practice in Chattanooga for the brief period of 1890-91 that they were there. The following appeared in the April 1891 issue of Inland Architect and News Record (p. 39). Their work was very popular and they were active all over the Southeast, notably Chattanooga, Bristol, Tennessee, and Bristol, Virginia.

"Architects Townsend and Stone have prepared plans for two new buildings to be erected at Sullin's College, Bristol, Tennessee.¹ One of them will be the main college building; it will be seventy feet square, three stories high, brick with stone trimmings and topped with a tower in which will be a clock so large that the time of day can be seen from any part of the city: to cost \$25,000. For King's College,² a four story

brick building, slate roof, steam, size 42x84 feet, cost \$26,000. Also preparing plans for the Chattanooga exposition several frame buildings, to cost about \$60,000. For the East Tennessee Land Company,³ a three story office building size 58x68 feet, pressed brick and stone, hot air, to cost \$20,000. For the city of Bristol, Tennessee, a market house, size 60x150 feet, cost \$13,000. For J.H. Warner,⁴ a two story residence, size 50x70 feet, pressed brick and stone, slate roof, hot water, cost \$26,000. For A.B. Whiteaker, a five story office building, size 33x64 feet, brick and stone, steam, hydraulic elevators, cost \$25,000. For the Temple Court Building Company a six story office building, size 65 1/2 x 100 feet, two stories stone and four stories pressed brick, steam elevators, cost \$46,000. Also have in hand quite a number of moderate size residences, both in brick and frame, ranging from \$3000 to \$10,000."

1- Sullin's College is in Bristol, Virginia.

2- Located in Bristol, Tennessee.

3- Located in Chattanooga.

4 Located in Chattanooga. This is the house surveyed.

3. Original and subsequent owners:

(a). Legal description: Lots 44-45 Ft. Wood Addition to the City of Chattanooga, Hamilton County, Tennessee. Part of a 2 1/3 21 and 1/3 acre tract known as the Ft. Wood Addition, and part of the northeast quarter section 28, 2nd township, 4th range, west of Basis line in the Ocoee District.

(b). The following is a complete chain of title. All book references are to Hamilton County Deed Books.

Book 15, p. 150. 8/22/1860.

Green N. Pryor to Wm. F. Keith

"..the west half of my 80 acres." for \$7000. recorded 8/22/1860.

Book 18, p. 694. 2/8/1869. (with map)

Alexander H. and Charles M. Keith, Executors of Estate of William F. Keith, deceased to John J. Elwell and Dudley Baldwin of Cleveland, Ohio.

21 1/2 acres for \$1000 cash and note for \$2000. Recorded 6/14/1869.

Book R-2, p. 227. 2/2/1885.

Agreement to purchase and vest title in J.L. McCollum, Trustee.

Agreement to purchase 21 and 1/3 acres - the Fort Wood property of Dudley Baldwin for \$40,000; to divide the property into 42 shares of \$1000 value each; to be managed, organized and surveyed by L.S. Slauton and Co.; to allow shareholders to swap shares for lots; to lay off streets, lots, alleys, etc.; to construct streets, curbs, and sewers; and to vest title in J.L. McCollum, Trustee.

Book R-2, p. 231. 3/3/1885.

Dudley Baldwin to J.L. McCollum, Trustee.
the Ft. Wood property for \$40,000.

Book R-2, p. 349.

J.L. McCollum, Trustee, et al to Harry S. Probasco and Lewis E. Rees.

Lots 43,44,45,64,92, and 93 in consideration of rendering shares according to agreement of 2/2/1885.

Book 47, p.564. 5/22/1886.

L.E. Rees and Harry S. Probasco to L.S. Colyar.
Lots 44-45, for \$3,100.

Book P-3, p. 202. 12/12/1888.

L.S. Colyar and wife to J.H. Warner.
for \$10,000.

Book S-5, p. 131. 7/2/1894. Deed of Trust.

Jos. H. and Alice G. Warner to David B. Ramsey, Trustee.
to secure Northwest Mutual Life Ins. Co. of Wisconsin,
William P. McLaren, Second Vice-President, for \$10,000.

Book N-6, p. 43. 3/9/1898. Release.

David B. Ramsey, Trustee to J.H. Warner and wife.

Book P-15, p. 581. 7/7/1920.

Joseph H. Warner and wife to C.F. Hood and wife.
for exchange of property, plus note for \$7,500, plus
assumption of remainder of note of \$10,000.

Book O-19, p. 403. 5/11/1925. Deed of Trust.

Charles F. Hood and wife to W.A. Sadd, Trustee of
Chattanooga Savings Bank and Trust Co.
for \$18,000.

Book 710, p. 246. 7/31/1935. Trustee's Deed.

A.C. French, successor Trustee to W.A. Sadd, Trustee
(Book H-28, p.103) and Charles F. Hood to E.H. Lawman
Receiver.

In consequence of default of Deed of Trust of 5/11/1925 and Book O-19, p. 403, Lots 44-45 were sold to E.H. Lawman Receiver for First Securities Co. (appointed by Chancery Court Docket #25372, Bankruptcy action of First National Bank VS. Charles S. Coffey, Trustee, et al 1/12/1933) sold to Lawman at courthouse door 7/31/1935, for \$5,000. Recorded 8/7/1935.

Book W-29, p. 653. 11/18/1937
E.H. Lawman, et al, Receivers to J.H. Corbitt and wife. the south 33 feet of lots 44&45, fronting on Palmetto Street 33 feet and running back along parallel lines 100 feet, for \$3,500.

Book 825, p. 81. 9/17/1941
E.H. Lawman, et al, Receivers to Maybelle North and A.J. Fletcher, Jr.
Lots 44&45 except for southern 33 feet, for \$10,000.
Subject to city zoning ordinance #1843. Recorded 9/27/1941.

Book 1180, p.90 4/21/1955
Maybelle North to G. and M.B. Trehwitt.
for \$12,000 in notes.

Book 1351, p. 180. 5/1/1959.
Gordon Trehwitt and wife to B.B. Croley.
for \$18,000 in notes.

Book 1557, p. 679. 11/21/1963.
Barna B. Croley to Gordon Trehwitt and wife.

Book 2099, p. 621. 5/3/1973
Gordon Trehwitt and wife to Metropolitan Investment Corporation,
John Dyson, President.
for \$13,000 in notes.

4. Original plans and construction: This seventeen room residence on slab foundation with a 2772 foot base area cost \$26,000 when built. The roof is slate with turret and hip gable. Floors are one inch hardwood strips. Walls are plaster with wallpaper. Ceilings are plaster with painted stencil work now covered with paper. A garage is at the rear. The lot now measures 100'x 159'.
5. Alterations and additions: Post World War II rear porch additions and alterations: first story porch enclosed; second story enclosed porch addition of 2"x4" frame construction and covered with asphalt shingle.

Also altered at the same date was the top or attic floor which was finished with 2"x4" stud frame construction with dry plaster wall covering. This floor was partitioned to provide three additional rooms.

- A. Historical Context: Joseph H. Warner, like his residence illustrates the commercial, industrial, and financial history of this region in the post-Reconstruction years. He was born in Sumner County, Tennessee, September 5, 1843. His older brother James was a prominent iron master. At age 12 he came to Chattanooga and began to work as a clerk with his brother in the hardware business.

At age 19, in 1862, he enlisted in the Confederate infantry. Captured at the Battle of Missionary Ridge, he was sent to the Federal prison at Rock Island, Illinois. In 1866, he was back in Chattanooga and back in the hardware business. The 1870s were slow but a general boom developed in the 1880s. In 1879, Warner helped organize the Third National Bank. He was elected Vice-President and was later President for three years. In 1881 he organized the Chattanooga Street Railway Company and was its President. He bought out Chattanooga's one small horse-car line.

In 1888 he sold his interest in the J.H. Warner and Company firm that had begun as a small hardware operation many years before. In 1889 his Chattanooga Street Railway Company was also sold. In this same year Warner along with G.M. Lee, J.L. Divine, W.T. Green, and others organized the Fourth National Bank and Warner became its President. In 1890 he organized the Tennessee Slate Corporation of Blount County. These slate mines were a chief source of roofing material in the Southeast. He was also very interested in the natural resources of Tennessee, especially its iron, coal, and phosphates. He became involved with the extraction of phosphates and the production of fertilizer.

1888-92 mark the prime years of Chattanooga's early development. These were very successful years for Joseph H. Warner as well. In 1891, he and his family moved from their residence at 217 Gilner Street to their new stately, luxurious, and expensive home at 800 Vine Street.

Prosperity waned in the 1890s. The Panic of 1893 brought several years of depression to Chattanooga and the country. In 1894, Warner found it necessary to mortgage the house, and in 1895 the Fourth National Bank collapsed and Warner left the banking business.

In 1896 the company that had bought out the street railway went bankrupt. They had improved the system and electrified it but their success was limited by the severe financial conditions of the times. Thus when the company became insolvent ownership reverted to the original company. Warner devoted much of his attention to the system. He extended the lines and added new equipment. His efforts

were so appreciated that it is said of him that he "was practically the founder and creator of the modern street railway in this city." In 1906 he sold out to the Chattanooga Railway and Light Company. In 1911, Chattanooga established its commission form of government and Joseph H. Warner became the first city commissioner of public utilities, grounds and buildings, and it was during his term of office that the city acquired the property for Warner Park named for him.

Joseph Warner died May 29, 1923. In just a few years an even greater depression than that of 1893 would sweep the country. These times dealt fatal blows to the generation of the wealthy upper class that had developed in the post-reconstruction period, just as the Civil War had done to the ante-bellum aristocracy in the South. The Joseph H. Warner Home stands as a reminder of the quality workmanship and the opulence of an earlier age which has not and may never again be matched.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The 2 1/2 story residence measures approximately 70' x 70'. The front is five bays wide. The plan is square, with irregular elements, which are caused by the protruding bays.
2. Foundation: Brick foundation with coursed rock-faced limestone ashlar facing.
3. Walls: Red brick masonry construction. Rock-faced quoins and terra cotta ornamentation. Slate shingles in the southeast and southwest sides of the house.
4. Structural system, framing: (Not recorded).
5. Porches: The front (northeast elevation) has a one-story veranda of sandstone, limestone, brick and wood construction. The columns are typically Romanesque. The entrance, which is accessible by steps, is crowned with a pediment. The porch extends to the northwest side of the house.

There is a porte-cochere on the southeast side of the house. The columns are the same as those on the front veranda. In the rear (southwest elevation) of the house are the three porches of predominantly wood construction. One of them is on the second floor. All have simple box columns and lattice work.

6. Chimneys: Irregularly placed brick chimneys.

7. Openings:

- a. Windows: The predominant windows in the house are one-over-one sash. The gable ends have "Venetian" windows consisting of three sash windows and an elliptical panel, and small sash windows. One dormer located on the roof of the southwest elevation has a pair of small sash windows.
- b. Doors: (Not recorded).

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Hipped slate roof on main core; ridge parallel to front facade. Intersecting cross gables and pyramidal roofs with slate shingles.
- b. Cornice: Sheet metal egg-and-dart cornice. The front turret has a brick herringbone frieze below this cornice.

B. Description of Interior:

General information: The house is notable for its elaborate interior woodwork and mantles as well as its built-in wood parlor bureau. (This information is incomplete).

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography:

Vertical File, Historical Collection, Chattanooga Public Library.

Hamilton County Deed Books. (Name and address of repository not given).

Hamilton County Tax Assessor's Maps, Descriptions and Drawings. (Name and address of repository not given)

Chattanooga City Directories, 1889-95, Chattanooga Public Library.

Inland Architect and News Record April 1891, p. 39. (Available at Avery Library of Columbia University, New York, New York).

Prepared by: Joseph L. Herndon
HABS Historian
HABS East Tennessee project
Summer 1974

Edited by: Susan McCown
HABS Architectural Historian
Spring 1986

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This 1974 project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Tennessee Historical Commission and the East Tennessee Historical Society. Under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, the project was prepared by Joseph L. Herndon, HABS Historian. The paper was edited in the Spring of 1986 by Susan McCown, HABS Architectural Historian in the Washington, D.C. office, for transmittal to the Library of Congress. The photographs of the house were taken in February 1983 by Jack E. Boucher, HABS Staff Photographer.